

THANKS to a Tony Horseman penalty on the stroke of half time, Wycombe Wanderers took their Rothmans Isthmian League record to three wins out of four matches at Hayes on Tuesday night. And but for some glaring misses in front of goal they could have saved themselves a few anxious moments towards the end of the game.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the Blues had at least 10 good chances to score at Church Road. Only one was accepted and had Hayes hit back with a late equaliser, it would have been a travesty of justice.

Once again, it was the mid-field three who controlled the game and ensured Wycombe's

Hayes 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1

Report by STUART EARP

supremacy. Terry Reardon was an artist in distribution while Mick Holifield's aggressive running was a constant threat. With these two on form, Wycombe ticked over nicely — until they were faced with the goal.

Young Derek Harris was the chief offender. He missed a couple of "sitters" from under six yards but once he gains a little more experience, he should put these sort of opportunities away more regularly.

Defensively, Wanderers looked a little slow at times but their dominance in the air checked the home strikers time and again. Paul Birdseye had a particularly good game at right back and showed his attacking potential as early as the second minute when he overlapped

onto Reardon's measured pass and lashed a shot towards the near corner of the net. Goalkeeper Alan Cox did well to push it away for a corner — one of six won by Wycombe in the first 20 minutes, such was the extent of pressure on Hayes.

Delaney, who got in one or two good strikes from set pieces, watched his looping header cleared off the line after three minutes and then headed just past the post from another corner.

After 28 minutes Holifield surged past a static defence and rammed in a drive which Cox knew little or nothing about but stood relieved as it struck him on the arms and was cleared. John Maskell, inactive for the first half hour, saved bravely at Bob Wiles' feet and then

gathered Frank Seward's header well.

Just on half time, when it looked as though Wycombe would have nothing to show for their superior football, they were awarded a penalty. Holifield started the trouble with a 25 yard pass to Geoff Anthony. The Welshman was two yards inside the box when John O'Sullivan brought him down — and almost his shorts too — with a tackle more suited to a rugged field. Horseman expertly sent Cox the wrong way from the spot.

Hayes came into the game a little more after half time but they were never settled and looked likely to concede more goals whenever Wycombe reached their penalty area — which was pretty regularly. Wanderers had such a constant supply of ball in midfield, they seemed to be coming forward every minute and it was only due to the veteran Bobby Hatt, still a very effective player, that Hayes survived some class attacking by the visitors.

With possession guaranteed, Wycombe seemed at times to be unsure what to do with it. On occasions, they tried the impossible and wasted potential chances with over elaborate build-ups. At other times, the approach work to goal was excellent but the final pass frustratingly went astray.

Harris spurned two chances inside a minute mid-way through the half. Reardon threaded a ball through the defence but the centre forward lofted his shot into the side netting and then O'Sullivan headed a cross straight to Harris's feet but he lifted the ball over from four yards.

Cox, whose punching of the ball put his colleagues under extra stress, saved a Horseman lob with 72 minutes gone and as Wycombe began to find it increasingly difficult to score goals, a Hayes equaliser was looking uncomfortably close at hand.

Howard Kennedy replaced Anthony for the final 10 minutes, during which time Wycombe had another chance to find the net but Harris headed over from close range.

There was one game (no names mentioned) this season when Wycombe were struggling to create scoring opportunities. With more confidence and teamwork amongst the players, they are coming thick and fast now. And if they can brush up on their work in front of goal it would round off what looks to be a useful side.

HAYES: A. Cox; A. Carrington, R. Ross, R. Hatt, J. O'Sullivan; T. Burton, S. Palfrey, K. Kent; F. Seward, R. Wiles, J. Roseman. Sub. M. Hewson (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, J. Delaney, R. Eaton; D. Alexander, T. Reardon, M. Holifield; A. Horseman, D. Harris, G. Anthony (sub. H. Kennedy 80 mins.).

Referee: C. Gregory.

Half time: 0-1. **Goalscorer:** Wycombe — Horseman pen. (45).